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SUBJECT: OSCE/PERMANENT COUNCIL: STATEMENT ON
COMMEMORATION OF INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS DAY

11. (U) Post is authorized to present the following statement
at the Permanent Council meeting in Vienna on December 10.

Begin text:

Madam Chair,

Today, December 10, is International Human Rights Day, which marks the 61st Anniversary of the adoption of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, a document that affirms the inherent rights of people everywhere and enshrines basic freedoms of expression, peaceful assembly, association and belief. The focus of this year's Human Rights Day is on non-discrimination.

Last week in Athens, we reaffirmed that respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, democracy and the rule of law are at the core of the OSCE comprehensive concept of security, and that combating intolerance and defending human rights are important elements in the promotion of human rights and democratic values. Violations of human rights, including hate crimes and other violent manifestations of intolerance, threaten the security of both individuals and society, and give rise to conflict and violence on a wider scale.

The United States wishes to underscore our concern over human rights violations and acts of violence directed at individuals on account of their sexual orientation or gender identity. The United States has recently passed legislation that broadens the definition of hate crimes to include violent crimes that target individuals on the basis of their sexual orientation and gender identity. We urge respect for the human rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender individuals in the OSCE region and around the world.

We wish to note the critical role that civil society plays -- and must be allowed to play without unnecessary hindrance -- to further the promotion of tolerance and combat acts of violence and other human rights abuses.

As we join people around the globe in observing International Human Rights Day and Week, we recall that the primary responsibility for addressing acts of intolerance and human rights violations rests with governments, and urge participating States to implement existing OSCE commitments in the fields of intolerance, non-discrimination and fundamental freedoms.

Thank you Madam Chair.

END TEXT
CLINTON